

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

February 9, 2016

Resolution to Participate in the National Stepping Up Initiative

Los Angeles County (County) has thoughtfully and fully committed to improve the treatment of persons with mental illnesses and substance use disorders, while preserving public safety, through the creation of a comprehensive jail diversion plan and integrated jail health services.

On May 6, 2014, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion directing several departments, under the leadership of the District Attorney, to move expeditiously toward establishing a comprehensive diversion program for the County, by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the existing mental health diversion programs and currently available permanent supportive housing. As stated in the Board's motion: "Diversion can address the untreated mental illness and substance abuse that is often the root cause of crime. By providing appropriate mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and job readiness training, as well as permanent supportive housing when it is needed, the mentally ill are stabilized and less likely to commit future crimes." Accordingly, mental health diversion is beneficial to the community as a whole, when positive interventions change the lives of offenders, their family members and victims whose future harms can be prevented.

On June 9, 2015, the Board moved to create a single, integrated jail health services structure and move the medical responsibilities currently held by the Sheriff's

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Department Medical Services Bureau and responsibility for providing mental health services in the jails, currently held by the Department of Mental Health, to the Department of Health Services (DHS). Through this effort, the Board seeks to improve quality and coordination of care while facilitating re-entry into the community.

On August 10, 2015, the District Attorney presented her mental health diversion report, entitled *Mental Health Advisory Board Report: A Blueprint for Change* which included detailed recommendations to enhance existing efforts and implement new ones.

On August 11, 2015, the Board reaffirmed its continued commitment to mental health diversion by adopting a motion which created a permanent leadership structure to implement these recommendations, supported by dedicated resources. In particular, the Board established a dedicated Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) within DHS, which would coordinate all County diversion efforts. The Board also established a new Permanent Steering Committee (PSC) to provide leadership resources to the ODR through appropriate recommendations for policies and priorities. The PSC includes stakeholder representatives from various County departments and the community who provide substantial expertise in the relevant subject areas of housing, health, mental health, substance use disorder services, and criminal justice issues.

Consistent with the robust and ongoing collaboration within the County, it is now time to expand the County's collaborative efforts on a greater scale through participation in the National Stepping Up Initiative. The National Stepping Up Initiative is sponsored by the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments Justice Center, and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation, which are jointly hosting a National Summit on Reducing the Prevalence of Individuals with Mental Illnesses and Jails. The Stepping Up Initiative seeks to build a national consensus that the time has come for every jurisdiction to consider the timely and important subject of the over-representation of people with mental illnesses in the County's jails.

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Because the County has already committed to mental health diversion, it is now well-poised to assume a leadership role nationally. The stated goals of the Stepping Up Initiative are to convene expert leaders and decision makers; commence a dialogue regarding data, treatment and service capacity; and create an action plan with measurable outcomes to safely reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in the jails. The Stepping Up Initiative complements this Board's existing practices and goals regarding mental health diversion.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Hereby resolve to support the National Stepping Up Initiative.

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(YV)

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES STEPPING UP TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES IN JAILS

WHEREAS, counties routinely provide treatment services to the estimated 2 million people with serious mental illnesses booked into jail each year;

WHEREAS, prevalence rates of serious mental illnesses in jails are three to six times higher than for the general public;

WHEREAS, almost three-quarters of adults with serious mental illnesses in jails have co-occurring substance use disorders;

WHEREAS, adults with mental illnesses tend to stay longer in jail and, upon release, are at a higher risk of recidivism than people without these disorders;

WHEREAS, county jails spend two to three times more on adults with mental illnesses that require interventions compared to those without these treatment needs;

WHEREAS, without the appropriate treatment and services, people with mental illnesses continue to cycle through the criminal justice system, often resulting in tragic outcomes for these individuals and their families;

WHEREAS, Los Angeles County takes pride in its responsibility to protect and enhance the health, welfare, and safety of its residents in efficient and cost-effective ways;

WHEREAS, Los Angeles County has created a single, integrated jail health services structure to improve health, mental health and public health services provided to inmates and has also established an Office of Diversion and Reentry to promote the successful reentry to the community after release from jail; and

WHEREAS, through Stepping Up, the National Association of Counties, The Council of State Governments Justice Center, and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation are encouraging public, private, and nonprofit partners to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, THAT the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles, do hereby sign on to the Call to Action to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in our county jail, commit to sharing lessons learned with other counties in my state and across the country to support a national initiative and encourage all county officials, employees, and residents to participate in Stepping Up. We resolve to utilize the comprehensive resources available through Stepping Up to:

1. Convene or draw on a diverse team of leaders and decision makers from multiple agencies committed to safely reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in jails;
2. Collect and review prevalence numbers and assess individuals' needs to better identify adults entering jails with mental illnesses and their recidivism risk, and use that baseline information to guide decision making at the system, program, and case levels;
3. Examine treatment and service capacity to determine which programs and services are available in the county for people with mental illnesses and co-occurring substance use disorders, and identify state and local policy and funding barriers to minimizing contact with the justice system and providing treatment and supports in the community;
4. Develop a plan with measurable outcomes that draws on the jail assessment and prevalence data and the examination of available treatment and service capacity, while considering identified barriers;
5. Implement research-based approaches that advance the plan; and
6. Create a process to track progress using data and information systems, and to report on successes.

The foregoing resolution was adopted on the 9th day of February, 2016, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles, and ex officio the governing body of all other special assessments and taxing districts, agencies, and authorities for which said Board so acts.



PATRICK OGAWA, Acting Executive Officer-
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles

By Carla Little
Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
MARY WICKHAM
County Counsel

By Sham a Reichman
Principal Deputy County Counsel